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Choking warning needed on candy: U.S. legislators

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WASHINGTON-- A group of American politicians is demanding warning labels on candies that might cause a child to choke.

The move comes after six children in the United States choked to death on mini-cup jelly products, also called "gel candy." At least a dozen children have died this way in other countries.



Mini-cup jelly candy

- FROM Aug. 16, 2001: [Choking deaths prompt candy warnings](#)

The jellies are sold in creamer-sized containers and can become lodged in the throat because of the shape and consistency. Jellies made with konjac (also known as konjac, konnyaku or glucomannan), a binding agent, seem especially hard to swallow.

Many of the konjac jellies come from Asia. Health Canada has issued at least four recalls on the jellies since August 2000.

One Toronto girl choked on a candy in April 2000.

- FROM Nov. 14, 2001: [Doctor calls for ban on 'killer candies'](#)

Mike Honda, a Representative from California, has introduced the *Food Choking Prevention Act of 2002*. It now moves to Congress to be debated.

The proposed legislation requires warning labels on food and candy just as some toys have choking warnings. The Food and Drug Administration would have to create a database of choking incidents and move more quickly to test the candies or food involved.

"It's a no-brainer to me. If we just paid attention to this we could save lives," said Honda.

Honda cites new government research suggesting thousands of children are injured and dozens killed each year from choking on candy.

- RECALL: [Mini-cup Jelly Product](#)

In Canada, Dr. Warren Goldstein lobbied the federal government to ban the jellies from the marketplace last fall. Goldstein was unable to revive the four-year-old girl in Toronto who choked on the candy.

Goldstein sent a petition signed by surgeons, family doctors, emergency specialists and child experts to the federal government. In November 2001 Health Canada recalled all jelly products containing konjac from the market. However, many can still be found at retailers.

The most recent recall from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency involves Cityfood Fruits Konnyak Jelly distributed in Ontario.

Written by CBC News Online [staff](#)

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